

## Rocky Mountain House – Heart of the David Thompson Bicentennial Celebrations.



Rich in the history of the fur trade, voyageurs and adventurers, Rocky Mountain House, is at the heart of the North American David Thompson Bicentennial celebrations (2007-2011).

The North Saskatchewan River brought fur traders here over 200 years ago. Pushing ever further west from Hudson Bay and Montreal, rival companies in fierce competition sought to extend trade to more groups of Aboriginal people. In the year 1799, two trading posts were established: Acton House by the Hudson's Bay Company and Rocky Mountain House by the North West Company. These two companies, before and after amalgamation, traded with nine different Aboriginal Peoples in the Rocky Mountains.

One of the most significant visitors to Rocky Mountain House was David Thompson, for whom Rocky would serve as base camp for his 1807 journey through Howse Pass, looking to blaze a trade route across the Rockies and to the Pacific. 2008 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of David Thompson's arrival at Rocky Mountain House after spending the winter on the west side of the Rocky Mountains. He was making his way to Fort William to bring news of his breakthrough into the Pacific watershed.

Over the next several months, Rocky Mountain House will come alive with history. The Friends of the Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site and the Rocky David Thompson Bicentennial Brigade, along with partners and support across the community and region, are well on their way to planning an international conference and fur trade festival. The community will host a Rupert's Land Conference, musical and dance performances, art exhibits, educational projects, historic reenactments, a fur trade banquet, demonstrations, field trips and much more. All of these activities will coincide with the highly anticipated grand reopening of the Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site in Spring 2008.

For more information or to get involved, please contact Carolyn Kent at 845-7311 or Scott Whiting at 845-2412.



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